

Prabuddha Bharata

No. 33—Vol. IV—APRIL 1899

INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE BOUNDS OF HINDUISM

HAVING been directed by the Editor, (writes our representative) to interview Swami Vivekananda on the question of converts to Hinduism, I found an opportunity one evening on the roof of a Ganges houseboat. It was after night-fall and we had stopped at the embankment of the Ramakrishna Math, and there the Swami came down to speak with me.

Time and place were alike delightful. Overhead the stars, and around the rolling Ganges. While on one side stood the dimly lighted building, with its background of palms and lofty shade trees.

"I want to see you, Swami," I began, "on this matter of receiving back into Hinduism those who have been perverted from it. Is it your opinion that they should be received?"

"Certainly," said the Swami, "they can and ought to be taken."

He sat grave y for a moment, thinking, and then resumed. "Besides," he said, "we shall otherwise decrease in numbers. When the Mohammedans first came, we are said—I think on the authority of Ferishta, the oldest Mohammedan historian,—to have been six hundred millions of Hindus. Now we are about

two hundred millions. And then, every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only a man less, but an enemy the more.

Again, the vast majority of Hindu perverts to Islam and Christianity are perverts by the sword or the descendants of these. It would be obviously unfair to subject these to disabilities of any kind. As to the case of born aliens, did you say? Why born aliens have been converted in the past by crowds, and the process is still going on.

In my own opinion this statement not only applies to aboriginal tribes, to outlying nations, and to almost all our conquerors before the Mohammedan conquest, but also to all those castes who find a special origin in the Purans. I hold that they have been aliens thus adopted.

Ceremonies of expiation are no doubt suitable in the case of willing converts, returning to their Mother-Church, as it were; but on those who were only alienated by conquest,—as in Kashmir and Nepal,—or on strangers wishing to join us no penance should be imposed."

"But of what caste would these people be, Swamiji?" I ventured to ask.—"They

must have some, or they can never be assimilated into the great body of Hindus. Where shall we look for their rightful place?"

"Returning converts," said the Swami quietly, "will gain their own castes, of course. And new people will make theirs. You will remember," he added, "that this has already been done in the case of Vaishnavism. Converts from different castes and aliens were all able to combine under that flag, and form a caste by themselves,—and a very respectable one too. From Ramanuja down to Chaitanya of Bengal, all great Vaishnava teachers have done the same."]

"And where should these new people expect to marry?" I asked.

"Amongst themselves as they do now," said the Swami quietly.

"Then as to names," I enquired. "I suppose aliens and perverts who have adopted non-Hindu names should be named newly. Would you give them caste-names, or what?"

"Certainly," said the Swami, thoughtfully, "there is a great deal in a name!" and on this question he would say no more.

But my next enquiry drew blood. "Would you leave these new comers, Swamiji to choose their own form of religious belief out of many-visaged Hinduism, or would you chalk out a religion for them?"

"Can you ask that?" he said. "They will choose for themselves. For unless a man chooses for himself the very spirit of Hinduism is destroyed. The essence of our Faith consists simply in this freedom of the Ishtam."

I thought the utterance a weighty one, for the man before me has spent more years than any one else living, I fancy, in studying the common bases of Hinduism in a scientific and sympathetic spirit—and the freedom the Ishtam is obviously a principle big enough to accomodate the world.

But the talk passed to other matters, and then with a cordial goodnight, this great teacher of religion lifted his lantern and went back into the Monastery, while I, by the pathless paths of the Ganges, in and out amongst her crafts of many sizes, made the best of my way back to my Calcutta home.

KALI, AND HER WORSHIP

[The following is the substance of a lecture delivered by Sister Nivedita (Miss M. Noble) on Monday, the 13th February, 1899, at the Albert Hall, Calcutta.]

I AM aware that I have little right to stand here, and offer myself as a lecturer on Kali-Worship. I am not qualified by a knowledge of Sanskrit or of Indian history to judge between rival theories as to the archæology

of the matter. I have been in India only one year, and as I am often reminded, that which seems incontestable to me now, may seem as unsupported in another year's time.

In the meantime, certain rights are mine. *First, I have been hearing of Kali-Worship all my life*, in terms not flattering to Kali or Her worshippers, and now that I am in contact with the thing itself, I have a right to stand

up and say that if the things I heard as a child were true, at least they were not the whole truth, and it is the whole truth that we should insist on having; and, secondly, I have the right of an Englishwoman to express public regret for the part which countrymen and women of my own have played in vilifying a religious idea, dear to men and women as good as they, and to utter a public hope that such vilification may soon end by the growth amongst us all of sheer goodwill and sympathy. *And, last of all, I have the right of all first impressions to be heard.* We often forget that what produces this, is just as real a part of the whole as the last. This is true of all goodness and beauty. Of anything so complex and extended as an area of religious consciousness, it is still more true. *A religious idea ought to be judged by all the states* which it produces. We must not ignore either the lowest or the highest apprehension of the symbol. Certainly, we must not ignore the highest, and we must remember that a common acknowledgment of that symbol binds the man, who now appreciates it in a very rudimentary way, to the *Yogi* who finds in it the higher manifestation of God. So that we should be careful how we meddle with, or pass judgment on, that lower form of worship, save to open out to it the natural path of development, by which the saint has gone to his far-reaching vision.

Again, it often happens that a certain freshness of view is absolutely necessary to us. How it is here, I cannot judge; but with us I know that nothing is so fatal as to hear the story of Christianity often from babyhood. That wonderful life by the Sea of Galilee and among the Hills of Judæa loses all its poignancy, and comes to mean nothing at all. But let it come perfectly new into the grown-up life of a man or woman, and it stands out the most vivid thing in the whole world.

And so the impact of our own religion upon a fresh consciousness is often a helpful thing to ourselves. There are two other things that help in the same way—(1) the study of another faith, giving a basis of comparison and induction, and, (2) a sect of people or a period in one's own life, denying the truth of the whole thing. This causes us to examine the grounds of our own creed, and the meaning of it, and its demands on us. I see nothing in Calcutta to-day, which is more calculated, if we accept it thankfully, to strengthen and purify our thought of God as the Mother than the presence of a section who deny and distrust our worship. Let us not forget that they seek truth as we do—and let us weigh carefully all that they urge, knowing that the Mother Herself speaks to us through their lips, for the perfecting of their love and ours.

Those of us who feel that the search after God is the be-all-and-end-all of human life—that the wise man, the man of fullest living, is he who cries out, with his whole soul in the cry, "Like as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God," we who believe this will see in national customs, in national history, in national ways of viewing things, only one or other mantle in which to clothe the apprehension of the Divine.

It was so that the Semite, dreaming of God in the moment of highest rapture, called him "Our Father," and the European, striving to add the true complement to God as the Child, saw bending over Him that Glorified Maiden whom he knew as "Our Lady."

But in India, the conception of woman is simpler, more personal, more complete. For India, there is one relationship that makes the home—that makes sanctity—that enters into every fibre of the being, and it is not Fatherhood. What wonder that in India God's tenderest name is that of Mother?

This idea of the Motherhood of God has

about it all that mysterious fascination that clings to the name of India for those who know it as students of history or philosophy.

In the old days, long before the birth of Buddhism, she was the land of treasures, to which men must go for precious stones, and sandal-wood and ivory. Then came the time when she meant much to the Western day that was dawning in Greece. The days of Buddhism, when her Gymnosophists taught the Greek philosopher her ancient wisdom, even then, perhaps, ancient. Again came our Middle Ages, when the countries round the Mediterranean had somewhat recovered breath, and when the Crusades began. The Crusades—which were the meeting ground between East and West—Eastern tendencies and interests all streaming towards Baghdad, and thence being thrown on the Syrian deserts by the Saracen.

Here in the Crusades, and afterwards in the Moorish occupation of Spain, and always in the streets and by-ways of those fascinating old ports of Venice and Genoa, must have been born the true mystery of the name of India.

The wonderful tales of travellers and pilgrims, the magnificence of Indian escorts and palaces, the feats of jugglers, and the extraordinary powers of endurance, shown by Indian ascetics, all these associations are called up by the name of India, for those who have never walked under the palm trees, nor seen the wild peacocks of the Motherland. And those are the associations of mediæval Europe.

Not contemporary with these surely, but belonging to the earlier days of the English occupation, is the glamour round the names of Indian doctrines. Such a delusive sheen tinges the popular reading of the word *Mahatma*, and such a spirit arises when we hear that in India you talk of this—the Motherhood of God.

Not but that this is a conception that must

occur in all religions that are to satisfy the soul. The Galilean Teacher did not forget it, when he took a little child, and set him in the midst, and said “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” St. Paul wrote to his disciples as a mother greatly anguished till Christ be formed in them. Every true and tender word of help and counsel has added to the Semitic idea, “Like as a *father* pitieth his children,” that sweeter notion of the Aryans, “Like as a mother pitieth her children.”

But in Christianity it has been implied—not overtly expressed, and the curious divergence between Indian and European ideals of women comes in here, further to thwart the birth of the thought of Motherhood in worship.

One of the most beautiful fragments of devotion that have come down to us from our Middle Ages is a little old French manuscript called “Our Lady’s Tumbler.” Here it might be thought, we had lighted on real Mother-worship. But this is not so—for the characteristic utterance is “Lady, you are the *mon-joie* (my-joy) that lightens all the world,—i. e., worship is not being offered to a mother, but to a queen. In India, this is never so. Behind palace walls or within her mud hut woman lives much the same simple and beautiful life of the old Aryan villages. Exquisite cleanliness and simplicity, infinite purification, and always the same intimate motherhood.

The notion of the lady is foreign to India, and those who love the country cannot be too thankful that it is so. Not that Indian woman should be deprived of anything that would make life noble and sweet and strong, but that their conception of existence is already more beautiful because more noble than any exotic notion. It must be through the intensifying of the Indian ideal of selflessness and wisdom and social power that emancipation shall come.

And this absence of luxury and self-indulgence from the ideal conception of Indian womanhood is fitly imaged in this symbol that you make to yourselves of God, the most precious religious symbol in the world, perhaps God the Mother,—and the Queen,—the Mother.

And of this symbol, you have made three forms—Durga, Jagaddhatri, and Kali.

In Durga, we have, indeed, an element of queenhood, but it is the power of the Queen, not her privilege.

Emerging from amidst the ten points of the compass, one foot on the lion, and one on the Asura, striking with the serpent and holding instruments of worship and weapons of destruction, there is, in Durga, a wonderful quality of literary interpretation. She is a wonderful symbol of the Power that manifests itself as Nature—the living energy at the centre of this whirlpool.

Dim overhead is that series of pictures of the Giving of the Gods, that brings home to us the relation of God, of our own soul, to this great Energy.

Below, all movement and turmoil, above the calm of eternal meditation. The Soul inert, and Nature the great awakener. Behind both That Which manifests as both—Brahman.

Look at it how you will, could there be a finer picture than this of the complete duality? But Durga is the Mother of the Universe. The Divine and resistless Energy that kills almost as many as it brings to the birth, that fosters by the terrible process of the destruction of the unfit.

Are God and Nature then at strife.

That Nature sends such evil dreams?

So careful of the type she seems,

So careless of the single life?

That I, considering everywhere

Her secret meaning in her deeds

And finding that of fifty seeds

She often brings but one to bear.

I falter where I firmly trod,

And falling with my weight of cares

Upon the great world's altar stairs

That slope through darkness up to God.

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope

And gather dust and chaff and call

To what I feel is Lord of all,

And faintly trust the larger hope.

Quivering human nerves know something that is called pain. How does Durga stand to that?

For the Gods that men make to themselves will not all utter the same voice of the Universal Life, but unless they have been so realised as to feed their worshipper's hunger, some faculty of his will be starved and stunted. We must remember that all *this* is but one way of seeing God—that every act and feeling is unconscious worship. God is its real soul, and if we hunger for love or for sympathy or for some word of encouragement and comfort, it is not in man that we shall find it—though it may be through man for the moment that our cry is stilled. And so in the symbol that we make of God, we need do no violence at all to this hungry human heart. We may and *must* satisfy it. Does Durga do this?

If not—the great World Force, indifferent to pain as to pleasure, is clearly not the mother of the soul.

In Jagaddhatri, we have some development of the notion of protection. But it is before Kali—the terrible one—Kali the tongue of flame—Kali—the face seen in a fire—Kali, surrounded by forms of death and destruction, that the soul hushes itself at last, and utters that one word “Mother.”

To the children she is “Mother” simply after their childhood's need. The mother who protects, with whom we take refuge—who says to the soul, as God says to all of us sometimes: “My little child—you need not know much in order to please me. Only love me dearly.”

And if in all that surrounds Her, there

anything to our grown-up vision terrible, their eyes are sealed that they do not know it, and they find in her—as is the case with all emblems—only what their own life and experience leads them to understand.

And to the grown man, she is “mother” after *his* need—the mother who does not protect but makes strong to overcome, who demands the very best that we can give, and will be content with nothing less.

Not, you see that in Kali there is balm for every wound—not that for the pain she gives the sweet—not that the truth of things is to be blinked and protection to be given to one, that means the desertion of another. We shall see that as long as we need that, as long as we in life are glad to take a place in the cool that leaves another to bear the burden and heat of the day, as long as we are thankful to possess, as long as we are cowards, even for those we love, so long we shall look for a coward’s satisfaction in our God. And we shall find it.

But when we have grown past this, we shall find the right hand uplifted in blessing, *while* the left destroys. We shall see the moment of destruction of the Universe as the moment of realisation. Life will be a song of ecstasy and thanks-giving that the last sacrifice has been demanded from us.

KALI THE MOTHER.

The stars are blotted out
 The clouds are covering clouds,
 It is darkness vibrant, sonant,
 In the roaring, whirling wind,
 Are the souls of a million lunatics,
 Just loose from prison house,
 Wrenching trees by the roots
 Sweeping all from the path.
 The sea has joined the fray
 And swirls up mountain waves,
 To reach the pitching sky—
 The flash of lurid light
 Reveals on every side
 A thousand, thousand shades

Of Death begrimed and black—
 Scattering plagues and sorrows.
 Dancing mad with joy.

Come, Mother, come.

For terror is Thy name.
 Death is in Thy breath.
 And every shaking step
 Destroys a world for e’er.
 Thou ‘Time’ the All-Destroyer.

Come, O Mother, come.

Who dares misery love,
 And hug the form of death
 Enjoy destruction’s dance,
 To him the Mother come.

Religion, it appears, is not something made for gentleness. Religion is for the heart of the people. To refine is to emasculate it. Every man must be able there to find bread. I must always illustrate from Christianity. I know that we have to thank God for certain elements of crudity and superstition that Christianity contains, that carry it to places that without these it could never reach.

The man who derives brutal satisfaction from life, or who sees no further than the surface of things, this man has a right to find these satisfactions, and to make for himself a worship which shall express these instincts. The man who is violent in his modes of thought, and vivid in his apprehension of life, the man who appreciates the struggle of Nature, and is strong enough to plunge into it fearlessly that man has a right to offer to God that which he hourly demands from life. He who with precisely the same instincts as these, is full of the pity of life and of creation, will see in God the Refuge of All, the Divine Mother—pitiful and compassionate. He will echo Her cry to the world: “Humanity, Humanity, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not!”

But consciousness will not be arrested here.

After all, what is the meaning of death—of destruction of the visible—of all these forms of horror and fear? Is it not the manifestation of that Divine Energy that carries through fire and slaughter and blind cruelty the message of love and deliverance home to us? And the man to whom once the great word of religion was “My child, you need not know much in order to please Me. Only love Me dearly. Talk to Me as you would talk to your mother, if she had taken you on her knee,”—that same man will now be able to say through every word and act and thought, “Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee.”

And at some infinitely distant time, perhaps, when duality is gone, and not even God is any longer God, may that other experience come of which the Master spoke when he said—“It is always on the bosom of dead Divinity that the blissful Mother dances Her dance celestial.”

As the child is occupied solely with the counting of some few objects, and the grown man with the truths of the higher mathematics, and as even those truths are transcended in reality by the faculty which they have developed, so here—the first symbols are as necessary as the last, if we are to reach the end. There was no ultimate importance in those early operations of counting, yet the mathematics could not have existed without them. So worship must have its feet in the clay, if with its head it is to reach to Heaven. At every stage, however, we realise something that is to remain with us. *To the children of the Mother, all men must be brothers.* Separation is not. Difference is not. There is the common Motherhood. Men speak Her words to us, supplicate with Her hands, love with Her eyes, and our part to them is infinite service. What does personal salvation matter, if God, the infinite God, calls for love and service?

And we realise the *greatness of fact.* No

betrayal of truth is so terrible as that of choosing what is beautiful and easy and soft, to be believed and worshipped. Let us face also and just as willingly the terrible—the ugly—the hard.

God gave life—true. But He also kills.

God is Eternity, but with that idea does there not rise the black shadow of time, beginning and ending in obscurity?

I have been born in happy circumstances. He gave them. How dare I say that, when to another He gave hardship and pain and care? Shall I not worship Him in this manifestation of destruction, nay is this not the very place where I shall kneel and call Him Mother?

But linked with this sincerity is that other which leads us to it and beyond it. “If thy hand or thy foot offend thee—cut it off, and cast it from thee. Better is it to enter into life halt or maimed than having two hands or two feet to be cast out into ignorance.” The God of Truth must needs be the God of Sacrifice. And, last of all, the great glory of this Mother-worship lies in its bestowal of *Manhood*. Time after time Kali has given men to India. In the history of Protap Sing, of Shivaji, and of the Sikhs stand the men She gave. If Bengal, the cradle of Her worship, the home of Her saints, parts with Her worship, she will part at the same time with her manhood. It is her part to renew that ancient worship with ten times greater devotion, for the loss would be to her lasting peril and disgrace.

I have not dealt in so many words, yet I have I think, covered in passing, the three main accusations, that are brought against Kali-Worship—

1. That it is worship of an image;
2. That it is worship of a horrible image; and
3. That it is a worship that demands animal sacrifice.

But I think it more fair to leave these points to be brought up in the discussion with all the force that individual conviction can give.

It is well to remember, that we seek truth, not the triumph of a party. And it is also well to remember, that where the question

of authority comes in, the only authoritative fault-finder would be that man who had realized all that Kali-Worship has to give.

And He found no fault. Rather, He uttered a message in the name of the Divine Mother that is to-day going out into all the world, and calling the nations to Her Feet

VISISHTADVAITISM

IN your review of Sri Bhagavad Gita with Sri Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita commentary translated by me into English (Page 29 of Prabuddha Bharata for February 1899) there are certain points about which you have expressed a wish to hear me. To meet your wishes and as having been furnished an opportunity to contributing something to your paper, as a reading of interest both to *Advaitins* and *Dvaitins*, I write a few lines for the present. More, if you care for it.

Outside the pale of Vedantism, Religions like, for instance, Mohammedanism and Christianity, which teach the Doctrines of Personal God, of the way of devotion (*Bhakti* or God-Love as I tersely put it), the Doctrine of Grace &c.—are under the impression that such tenets as these are peculiar to themselves, and are therefore foreign to Vedanta. To correct this impression and to show that Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita clearly demonstrates that all these Doctrines form part and parcel of the Vedanta; it has been necessary to adduce some evidence towards substantiating that position. If therefore you find scattered

throughout the book in the Foot-notes useful parallels between Vedantic and Ex-Vedantic systems, the conclusion according to you is not self-advertisement¹ but that Ramanuja's religious spirit is of a cosmopolitan character, and that he aimed at a Universal Religion—which is being practically carried out to this day, as far as India is concerned.

As to the *Drama* of the Universe about which you wish me to say something:—A *Drama* is both *tragedy* and *comedy*. You evidently take it in the sense of comedy. *Comedy*, if one would say, he would be one kind of extremist; *tragedy*, if another would say, he would likewise be another extremist. But *drama* covers both; that that is the fact no one will deny. If as you say, it is a *tragedy*, and a *real tragedy*, you would not care to live a moment in the world;

¹Whatever may the meaning be sought to be conveyed by Mr. Charlu here we are sorry that he should force us to point out the passage which we thought was not quite becoming to himself or his subject. We did not mean the foot-notes at all as he seems to think. We meant the passage in page XVIII beginning "As in the past, so in the present, mankind will hail with satisfaction a work, etc., etc."—Ed.

but the stern fact that all of us are so tenacious of life and its pleasures (albeit their fleeting nature) is sufficient evidence rebutting the absolutely *tragic* view taken of the universe, or the view that would be taken by the pessimist.

Be it tragedy or comedy, is it according to you 'very real'? If it is a drama—whatever that term may signify—to Ramanuja, it must be more so to Sankara? And to the latter, it is never 'very real' as it is to you, but a great *illusion*.

On this point, further, I would invite you to read the Vedanta-Sutra (II-i-33) '*Lokavat tu lila Kaivalyam*'—This sutra is neither Ramanuja's nor Sankara's, but Badarayana-Vyasa's. What would you understand by the term *lila*?—*tragedy* or *drama*? Both Ramanuja and Sankara agree that it is *drama*; whether it is Real or Unreal is another question. But as to you so to Ramanuja, it is *not real* to Sankara! If Ramanuja therefore views the Universe as a 'dramatic display' it is in the wake of the Sutra quoted.*

As to the rigorous *advaita* Srutis, certainly there are many. But there are rigorous *dvaita* Srutis also, you will admit. (I cannot enter into details here of course). And there are a third set known as the *Ghataka Srutis*, which undertake to harmonize between *advaita* and *dvaita* Srutis. It was here as you will see, the special mission of Ramanuja, to demonstrate this harmony and hence the inevitable System of *Visishtadvaita* running through the totality of

the Upanishads taken together. The Brahma-Sutra I. i. 11, you refer to, is I. i. 12, according to Sri Bhashya. It is : *Srutatvaccha*. If you wish to know exhaustively how Ramanuja interprets the *advaita* texts thereunder quoted, you ought to read the *Sri Bhashya* on that Sutra and of the Sutra I-i-2 : viz. '*Janmadyasya Yatah*'. But I may briefly state that to Ramanuja, *advaita* is indeed Unity, but a *compound* Unity, the constituents whereof are inseparable, or exist in the relation of *substance* and attribute, or *substance* (a term of Spinoza) and *mode* or soul and body, expressed in Sanskrit terminology ; as *Guni-Guna*, *Prakari-Prakara*, *Sariri-Sarira bhava*. I invite the readers to a perusal, among several others, of the exhaustive footnotes under pages 233-234 of the Gita, which will throw much light on this point.

To Ramanuja, a *cold abstract* God is non-entity. In other words a quality-less Brahm is to him negation. This is the old bone of contention between the *Advaita* and *Visishtadvaita* Schools, called the *Nirguna-Saguna-Vada*. The *Advaita* school postulates a Higher and a Lower Brahm, but to the *Visishtadvaita* School there is but one Brahm, which is *something with* Qualities and not a *nothing without* Qualities. To man's consciousness, as it is constituted, meditation or devotion to, a quality-less 'Thing-in-itself' is impossible. Vyasa-Sutra (III-iii-11). '*Anandadayah pradhanasya*,' is among others, elucidatory of this Question. If you admit at least *ananda* as a characteristic of the Deity, then you may have the consolation of a God who loves us ; and you may well prefer this

*Plato and Heraclitus, (of Greece) held this view. Those who care to pursue the subject further may read the topic embraced by the Sutra '*Aprayojanaratnat*.'

ananda-qualified God to an absolutely *no-qualified* abstraction² !

In the space of a short contribution, further expansion of the topic is inadmissible, but let me invite your readers to satisfy themselves as to what Ramanuja's views are, as to the *nirguna-vad*, and as to the *advaita* texts in the Upanishads, by reading the exhaustive commentaries of Ramanuja on Bhagavad Gita stanza 12, Book II, and stanza 2, Book XIII. On the latter, I particularly ask you to peruse the pages 410-414, where passages occur such as : "The contention of 'Brahm devoid of qualities' (= *nirguna-vada*) is justified," etc., etc.

Let me in conclusion thank you for your very fair review of my work ; and let me hope, that with the sympathy and appreciation of such impartial critics as you, I may be able to more fully expound the Doctrines of Ramanuja in the 2nd volume which is under preparation (D. V.). But let me note that your review is more on my unimportant preface of a few pages than on the important bulk of the work of Sri Ramanuja's Gita commentary which evidently has not been read through leisurely. (I am not sure, too, that you have looked at the Important Tables). You will therein

find that *Brahma-Jnanam* according to Ramanuja consists in short, of His *Svarupa*, *Rupa*, *Guna*, and *Vibhuti*. God to him is One. And he is of these several aspects, every one of which is true, and none of which is an illusion. There is no place to enter into details ;—but let me remark that under *Vibhuti* comes the Universe, about the real or illusory character of which there is so much controversy between the Advaita and the Dvaita Schools. Ramanuja is very strong about asserting that whatever *is* is real ; and in this, he finds yet another modern exponent in the person of Dr. Lewis G. Janes, M.A., (U.S.A.) who in his paper on 'Science, Metaphysics and Natural Law,' says : 'Rationally interpreted, all the evidence at our command asserts the inexpugnable verity of a universe external to our consciousness ; a universe related to us in certain determinate ways which we cannot alter by one jot or tittle by our subjective volition.' '*Chid-achid-avina-sambandhah, Isvarena*' as Sri Ramanuja would put it.

A. GOVINDA CHARYA.

[The Advaita recognises the necessity and utility of all systems of belief. In its economy there is room for the most infantile expression of the spiritual banking as well as for the loftiest flights of monistic speculations. It labours under no difficulty therefore when it

²We would respectfully beg to remind Mr. Charlu that according to the Advaita, Ananda is *not* a characteristic of God but Ananda *is* God. The same is the case with the other two words expressive of the God-head. Sat and Chit. Advaita teachers take the greatest pains to emphasize that Satchitananda cannot be said to be the correct name of God for the sufficient reason that He is *namamable*, being the infinite, and name means limitation,—but that it is used only because a better one has not yet been conceived of.—Ed.

³Mr. Charlu is welcome to claim Dr. Janes as a "modern exponent" of Ramanuja and we are sure our valued American friend will appreciate the distinction. But in justice to the Doctor we ought to tell Mr. Charlu that he has misquoted him. Dr. Janes talks of the extreme subjective attitude in the place and not of '*what is*' or the Absolute Reality, where Mr. Charlu levies in on his alliance. Dr. Janes's idea of the Absolute Reality will be found in Prabuddha Bharata, No. 32, pp. 36-37.—Ed.

meets with Dvaita or Visishtadvaita passages in the Srutis. Overzealous partisans of Advaita may have tortured these texts to serve their purpose; but while it was incumbent upon the other schools to do so to keep their heads high, the Advaita did not stand in need of such methods of procedure to preserve its natural supremacy. It is quite right that there should be easy steps in the Sruti to enable man to climb the tree of knowledge and that each step should be considered equally useful and important. The Advaita gains everything and loses nothing by accepting this broad and natural point of view.

We are happy to have the admission from Mr. Charlu that there *are rigorous* Advaita Srutis as there are Dvaita ones. But we cannot clearly make out if it is a personal opinion of his or if it is the opinion of modern Visishtadvaitins as well. We are led into this ambiguity by his statement that according to Ramanuja "Advaita is indeed Unity, but a compound Unity."

With the object of being further enlightened on this point we may here put in our objections to this method of explaining away the Advaita. This is clearly an attempt of the over-zealous kind stated above. The Visishtadvaita philosophers might have stood in particular need of it because naturally wishing to stand at the head they would try to bend the Advaita Srutis to fit in their thought grooves first of all. But a very little attention would show any reasonable person that it is an attempt to do the impossible. A 'compound unity' is absurd as a circular straight line, or which is the same, Brahman "with qualities." With all deference to Mr. Charlu and the school to which he belongs, we would venture to state that the conception of Brahman with quality argues an imperfect understanding of the nature of the infinite. It is true we cannot fully grasp the true nature of the infinite—but we may surely know this much that *it is*

not finite, nor is it the sum-total of finite things or attributes. Nor can the infinite be more than one. How could attributes be predicated of it? Attributes—because they are more than one—are finite. If they are put alongside the infinite as parallel straight lines the infinitude of the infinite is destroyed. Things transcending the infinite co-exist with the infinite and thus limit it. If they are parts of which the infinite is the whole no better fate awaits it. That which is the sum of finite things or attributes cannot be infinite. Brahman is infinite and described in the Srutis by negations. By qualifying Brahman with attributes the Dvaitin and the Visishtadvaitin not only cut themselves off from Reason but from Sruti too.

For purposes of worship and Vyāvahāric life Sankara's conception of a Lower Brahman is sufficient. Indeed there is very little difference between it and Ramanuja's God, so far as attributes and powers are concerned.

But the whole difference lies in the one being conceived as a part and parcel of the universal illusion (Sankara's God) and the other being beyond that illusion and in fact the creator and the controller of it (Ramanuja's God).

Because we cannot grasp the infinite Brahman—which by the way is the only reality—the Sruti gives us a substitute for it as a temporary measure so that when our intellects are sharp and strong she may lead us to the highest, says Sankara. According to Ramanuja this qualified finite God is the highest.

Let us see where these implications land us. Sankara's God being a part and parcel of the universal illusion cannot be held responsible for this piece of magical practice. He himself is a child of Mâyâ and therefore not its cause. But the same thing cannot be said of Ramanuja's God. Even if it be granted for argument's sake that pleasure and pain balance each other in the world what business had he to create

such an imperfect thing? If it is said that he did not create it, somehow or other Mâyâ created it in the beginning and made him the ruler of the creation; he only sends effects to people of their own karma:—Why did he allow Mâyâ to do it if he was omniscient and omnipotent?

In fact the Visishtadvaita conception of the

Universe and God is untenable if driven to logical extremes. But it has its undoubted sphere of usefulness. Our only object in making the above criticism is to emphasise the oft-repeated truism that one cloak should not be attempted to be made to suit all bodies.—Ed.]

MR. TATA'S SCHEME

WE are not aware if any project at once so opportune and so far-reaching in its beneficent effects was ever mooted in India, as that of the Post-graduate Research University of Mr. Tata. The scheme grasps the vital point of weakness in our national well-being with a clearness of vision and tightness of grip, the masterliness of which is only equalled by the munificence of the gift with which it is ushered to the public.

It is needless to go into the details of Mr. Tata's scheme here. Every one of our readers must have read Mr. Padsha's lucid exposition of them. We shall try to simply state here the underlying principle of it.

If India is to live and prosper and if there is to be an Indian nation which will have its place in the ranks of the great nations of the world, the food question must be solved first of all. And in these days of keen competition it can only be solved by letting the light of Modern Science penetrate every pore of the two giant feeders of mankind—Agriculture and Commerce.

The ancient methods of doing things can no longer hold their own against the

daily multiplying cunning devices of the modern man. He that will not exercise his brain, to get out the most from Nature, by the least possible expenditure of energy must go to the wall, degenerate and reach extinction. There is no escape.

Mr. Tata's scheme paves the path of placing into the hands of Indians this knowledge of Nature—the preserver and the destroyer, the ideal good servant as well as the ideal bad master,—that by having the knowledge, they might have power over her and be successful in the struggle for existence.

By some the scheme is regarded as chimerical, because of the immense amount of money required for it, to wit about 74 lacs. The best reply to this fear is: If one man—and he not the richest in the land—could find 30 lacs, could not the whole country find the rest? It is ridiculous to think otherwise, when the interest sought to be served is of the paramount importance.

We repeat: No idea more potent for good to the whole nation has seen the light of day in modern India. Let the whole nation therefore, forgetful of class or sect interests, join in making it a success.

WHAT IS THE NEW PANTHEISM

(Continued from page 8)

“**T**O define God is to deny him,” said Spinoza. There is a wise and significant point included in this remark. If, however, we look at the historic attempt on the part of universal humanity to define God from another point of view, we cannot help being impressed with the utter failure of humanity “to deny him.” God still lives in the thought of man; and he thus lives largely because of this very fact that man is forever trying to define him,—trying but miserably to fail. And, if after looking deeply into the tangled mysteries of philosophic and theologic definitions, or of arrogant authority, one finds himself pessimistically inclined to say, “There is no God” he will only need to drop himself down from this high and, if you please, hazy region of speculation, to the plane of a common, everyday life in order to see, with Voltaire, that “for the safety of society” we must not only be willing to “invent a God,” but as many would say, be ready also to enforce him.

The more rational way, however, to view the world’s attempt (and failure) to formulate its varied and more or less antagonistic conceptions of the ultimate reality in such a manner as to meet the universal human consciousness, is to regard it as the best possible proof that there is, in reality, a God, who, though past finding out, is, nevertheless, a constant challenge to the human understanding.

In the palmy days of Joseph Cook and while he was holding forth before such delighted audiences in the city of Boston, his subject, on one occasion, was Emerson. This address, which was delivered in Mr. Cook’s characteristic style, may be paraphrased as follows: Mr. Emerson believes in the immanency of God; therefore he is a pantheist. Being thus

effectually crushed by Mr. Cook’s ponderous logic, and duly labeled, Emerson was respectfully, but incontrovertibly, shelved among the metaphysical mummies of bygone days.

Our theme involves several perplexing problems. Two of these problems may be expressed with sufficient clearness, perhaps, by the following propositions: (1) How can we, in any actual, complete sense, cut loose from dualism on one hand and fail to plunge into some form of pantheism on the other hand? (2) Can the modern idea of the immanency of God in Nature successfully escape the charge of being pantheistic.

To a very large extent I think it will have to be admitted that Mr. Cook was right. Mr. Emerson was pantheistic. So was Goethe and the larger realm of poetry from the days of Goethe. “The English poetry of the century,” as has been stated by a recent essayist, “is alive with it: Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold,—it seems the ceaseless refrain of all their songs.” So with many of the essayists and, in fact, throughout the whole world of literature of the present day and of the immediate past. To come nearer home, there are those all about us, our best writers and teachers, whose writing would have to be classed in this category; although they would perhaps claim that they belong to that division of pantheists who may as well be denominated hypertheists. In any event the modern world’s apprehension, thinking, feeling and outreaching after reality, has resulted, thus far, in the conviction of an immanent God in all things,—the all pervasive presence of an Immanent Spirit. Dr. Hodge has said, “If God is in the planet, He must be in the atom.”—(*To be continued*).

DR. C. T. STOCKWELL.

REVIEWS

ANANDA-LAHARI with Yantras and Commentaries. Translated into English by *R. Anantakrishna Sastri*. Second Edition. Revised and enlarged.

This hymn of the Mother-aspect of God is said to have been composed by Sankaracharya. It abounds in philosophic and yogic references and read by itself is a beautiful devotional work. Certain commentators however have interpreted it as a Mantra-Sastra, each Sloka having a magical significance. Accordingly diagrams and the key-notes, by the joint potency of which the magic is said to be effected are given with each verse.

The translator's introduction is interesting and valuable and he has done the translation and notes creditably.

Madras: T. S. Subramania & Co., Palghat, 1899. Crown 8vo., pp. 88., price As. 10.

We have been favoured with copies of a Hindi Monthly Journal named "Prabhat" devoted to the Hindu Religion, and a Hindi translation of the Swami Vivekananda's opening speech at the Parliament of Religions. We thank Mr. Nakharē the Editor, for them and shall be extremely happy to see "Prabhat" bringing light to those for whom it has been started. It is published from the Olcott Press, Saugor.

The fifth number of our Bengali fortnightly (Udvodhan) is particularly strong. It opens with a review by the Swami Vivekananda of Prof. Max Muller's recent work "Life and Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna." It is written in the usual, racy and vigorous style of the Swamiji and contains many gems of thought. The second paper "Voice of Hope" by Babu Nagendra Nath Gupta the Editor of Lahore "Tribune" is an interesting interpretation of the spirit of unrest that is making its presence felt unmistakably all over the land. It is according to the learned writer due to the re-awakening of the ancient Indian spirituality.

The beautifully written "Life of Sri Ramanuja" by the Swami Ramakrishnananda and the interesting account of a "Journey to Tibet" by the Swami Suddhananda are continued. Other continued papers are the "Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna" written by the Swami Brahmananda and the "Daughter of Jhalwar"—a religious novel by the wellknown dramatist Babu Girish Chunder Ghose.

Another important article which calls for special notice is "The Teacher Sankara and the Theory of Maya" by Pandit Pramathanath Tarkabhusana, Professor of Smriti, Sanskrit College, Calcutta. It is one of the happy signs of the time that persons like Professor Tarkabhusana representing the orthodox school, should join hands with the most forward school of philosophers in Bengal, and help with the light of their ripe scholarship and thought in straightening the path of the popular understanding.

NĀNA KATHA

THE SIXTYSIXTH ANNIVERSARY held in the extensive new Math grounds, at Belur, Howrah (Bengal), was a success in every way. It is calculated about

twenty thousand people assembled, most of whom of course partook of the usual feasts. The Madras branch fed two thousand poor on the occasion.

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA writes to say that the Anniversary was celebrated for the first time at the Murshidabad Orphanage this year. There were several local gentlemen, Zeminders and others present, and the assembly was treated to music by an Amateur Concert party. About two hundred people were fed and two group photographs were taken. The Swami also thankfully acknowledges receipt of 42 maunds of paddy crops as donation to the Orphanage from the Agriculturists of a few villages in the District.

A CORRESPONDENT writes under date Dacca 22nd March 1899 :— About five weeks ago Swamis Virajananda and Prakashananda were sent to Dacca by Swami Vivekananda on Vedanta work, just a few days previous to the departure of the Swamis Saradananda and Turiyananda for Western India on the same mission. It is a month since Swami Prakashananda delivered his first lecture on "Hinduism" in English in a theatre room which was crowded to overflowing to hear the young Swami, who spoke fluently and laid great stress upon the practical realisation of those noble and sublime truths inculcated in the Hindu Religion. He concluded his speech with an appeal to the younger generations to lead the life of purity, truth and unselfishness. He delivered two other lectures in Bengali the one on the "Aim of Human Life" and the other on "Divine Love."

After they came, there was a talk of establishing here a place of religious dis-

cussion just like that of the "Ramakrishna Mission" of Calcutta and it has been brought into existence. Two weekly sittings were held with great success. In the last meeting Swami Prakashananda read and explained some portions from the Kenopanishad and Swami Virajananda read an essay on "Religion" in Bengali which was listened to with rapt attention, and very much appreciated by the audience. In this short time the young Swamis have been able to cultivate a feeling of close sympathy and love for themselves and their work, which is growing deeper and deeper in the hearts of the people every day.

Swami Prakashananda has just been called back to Calcutta for some special reason; Swami Abhayananda is expected to pay a visit here very shortly.

THE SWAMI ABHAYANANDA reached Madras on the 4th March and on Saturday the 6th was presented with an address of welcome by an Association of Young Men of Chintadripeta. Her beautiful reply to the Association, as well as her masterly speech the following day in Pachaiyappa's hall on the "Ethics of the Vedanta" together with an extremely interesting "Interview" by its representative were published in the "Madras Mail" of the 7th and 8th, all of which have since been widely reprinted in various parts of India. She reached Calcutta on Friday evening, the 17th March and held a reception at the Ramakrishna Mission the following day in which among others the Countess de Cannavarro was present. A correspond-

ent writing on the Anniversary Day speaks of her as follows: "Swami Abhayananda was there and addressed them, giving them the message from Chicago, 'We are all one.' She won golden opinions." Before going to Dacca, she delivered three lectures at the Classic Theatre to overflowing audiences, and expert opinion says, the Calcutta public was charmed with her eloquence. She left Calcutta on the 5th April and was given a hearty reception on the 7th at Northbrook Hall by the Dacca public.

THE FIRST of that garland of Sannyasins whom Sri Ramakrishna left behind him fourteen years ago, passed beyond the mortal regions at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, March 28th 1899. While the joy of release is infinite to the freed, his surviving brothers, friends and admirers feel the shock of separation from the Swami Yogananda doubly, inasmuch as the event brings the memory of the Master's departure back, green though it is always in their hearts, with a peculiar keenness. *Hari Om Tat Sat!*

The passing away of the Saint was wonderful. His words before death was: "My *Jnana* and *Bhakti* have so much increased that I cannot express them"—And when a Grihasta brother said "You have to come again with our Lord"—he told all those around him to sing loudly in a chorus "*Hari Om Ramakrishna.*" An old Sannyasin brother who was at the bedside at that solemn moment, writes, that they felt of a sudden such an inflow of a higher state of being, that they vividly realized the soul was passing to a much higher, freer and superior state of con-

sciousness than the bodily.

A correspondent, one of the older brothers, writes about the departed ".....many a time, he seemed to me nothing less than perfect in forbearance. The dream that he had about a month or two before his death is very significant. He saw the Master and heard him telling, 'You are too weary of your burden. You have had enough and need not stay any more, come to me.' The dream is a reality today, and he is there, where our too human visions cannot reach and we are left to feel the separation and make surmises and guesses. When I attempt to write anything of him, so many thoughts come crowding in, that it becomes all a jumble and I do not know where to begin or which to begin with." Another Sannyasin writes speaking of the event: "I did not know whether to joy or to sorrow." One of the younger members of the Math writes: "———ananda smiled and said 'All's well,' when I met him at 5 and said, 'I'm very sorry to hear this Swami!'" The same correspondent continues ".....as for the dead—the last ceremonies as I saw them, at the hour were inexpressibly solemn and beautiful, and the chanting of the 'Hari Om'! never sounded so fine. They waved lighted camphor before him and put on his gerna turban and flowers, and then they bore him away and I think it was 'Jaya Ramakrishna' that they sang then !.....and after they had taken him away, a great storm rose and the wind howled and sobbed on the tops of the trees. He was such a great Saint that it fills one with awe to belong to the order that contained him, even as the youngest member."